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INDICATIONS THAT IN MID-JANUARY 1956 THE CPSU PRESIDUM
REACHED THE DECISION TO ATTACK STALIN PUBLICLY

1. A review of Pravda and Kommunist and spot checks of Izvestia and the Cominform Journal between 1 October 1955 and the advent of the CPSU 20th Congress (14 February 1956) reveals that all public favorable mention of Stalin by Soviet Communists ceased as of 23 January. Prior to this date press treatment of Stalin still conformed to the old party line established in July 1953, whereby Stalin was pictured as the "great continuer of Lenin's cause". The halt in Soviet references to Stalin three weeks before the opening of the 20th CPSU Congress and approximately one month after Khrushchev and Bulganin returned from their Asian tour indicates the CPSU Presidium reached at this juncture a decision on the subsequent overt attack on Stalin.

2. The pattern of positive references to Stalin prior to 23 January 1956 is evident in the following quotations, which include those from speeches by leading Soviet Communists in November, December and January:

- a. Kaganovich, who addressed the Moscow Party's city organization at the 6 November celebration of the 38th anniversary of the October Revolution, and who spoke before an immense dual portrait of Lenin and Stalin, made four references to Stalin in his speech:

"...the teachers of the working class, Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin..."

"After his death, the Communist Party which had been built by Lenin continued, under the leadership of his faithful co-worker the great Stalin, to bring the Lenin plan into actuality."

"...the great ideas of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin..."

"We shall continue to walk the path to complete victory under the banner of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin."

- b. Pospelov, who wrote a review of "The Decembrist Armed Insurrection of 1905" for the 21 December edition of Pravda, listed Stalin as one of "the powerful figures in the Party who took part in the organization and direction of the armed struggle" in 1905.

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c. Voroshilov, who spoke in Berlin on 8 January on the occasion of Wilhelm Pieck's 80th birthday, observed that the East Germans were "transforming into life the great ideas of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin."

d. Furtseva, in a speech to the Twelfth Party Congress of the City of Moscow, as reported in the 18 January issue of Izvestia, mentioned Stalin once as follows:

"Strengthened by the teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, the Moscow City Party organization comes to the 20th Congress as a combat unit, tightly formed around the Central Committee, CPSU."

e. Kirichenko, in his 19 January address to the Ukrainian Party Congress, made two references to Stalin (one of which was carried in Pravda on 23 January):

"Communists of the Ukraine will continue to march towards the victory of the great cause of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin."

"Our Party has also paid great attention to the ever-victorious ideals of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin."

f. Pravda on 21 December commemorated the 76th anniversary of Stalin's birth with his large portrait on the front page, by devoting an article to him entitled "Life-Giving Power of the Ideas of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin", by mentioning him in the lead editorial and in an article on the Decembrist Armed Insurrection of 1905. Although Stalin is pictured here largely as the "continuer of Lenin's cause", it is as Lenin's "true" student, who gave a "masterful" elucidation of Leninism, who made "bold deductions" and gave "all his energy" to the creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory. Also, in his own right, "Stalin, at the head of the Communist Party, directed the forces of the Soviet people in smashing the enemy during the Great Patriotic War, and led our people to a world-historic victory."

Note: This last reference strongly contrasts with the version during and after the Congress, where Stalin is accused of not having prepared adequately for the war. The strongest statement to date on the subject appeared in a 3 April 1956 Red Star

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article by Col. E. Chasnikov: "The cult of personality restricted individual branches of science leading to stagnation of theoretical thought and sometimes to crude perversions. This relates to military science, to problems of theory and history of military affairs as well."

- g. Kommunist, on 22 December, also devotes an article to Stalin on the 76th anniversary of his birth. The tone is set by the title: "Following the Path of the Great Lenin". Representative passages include:

"A notable role in building and strengthening the CPSU belongs to I. V. Stalin, true pupil and co-worker of V. I. Lenin, continuer of his deathless cause."

"Stalin believed unreservedly in the ideas of Lenin, fought tirelessly for their purity and linked them closely to the practical tasks of socialist construction."

"I. V. Stalin accomplished great work in the elucidation of Lenin's ideas."

"Developing the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the nationality question, Stalin revealed its nature under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Stalin, in his own right, is credited in this article with having "revealed the nature of the socialist method of industrialization", having "developed the system of agricultural artels", having "unmasked numerous enemy attempts to undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat, and with having clarified and analyzed many important questions in his works. Concerning his wartime role the article merely states that: "Stalin, at the behest of the Party, was named chairman of the USSR State Defense Committee and supreme commander of the Soviet Armed Forces."

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- h. A sampling of quotations from Pravda during this period include:

"I. V. Stalin followed the legacy of the great Lenin and was the continuer of his cause." (2 Oct)

"The basis for ideological unity in the countries of the socialist camp is grounded in the great teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin." (2 Nov)

"We (Indonesians) bow our heads before the great Lenin and Stalin." (7 Nov)

"The world has never seen another theory which was able to exert such a powerful influence on the entire course of historical development, as the great teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin." (28 Nov)

"Stalin fervently dreamed of a meeting with Lenin since the early days of his revolutionary activity. When they first met Lenin greeted Stalin as an old acquaintance...." (26 Dec)

"The Communist Party and its Central Committee at the head of which was I. V. Stalin, continuer of the great work of Lenin, developed an excellent cadre of organizers from the ranks of the working class." (21 Jan)

3. That Stalin was virtually ignored after the Pravda, 23 January, quote from Kirichenko's address is borne out by the mere six references to his name in Pravda up to the advent of the 20th Congress. Of these six references, five were statements or actions of foreign Communists and the sixth was a notice that the 4th edition of Lenin's works contained a list of Marx-Engels-Stalin writings known to Lenin. The issue of Kommunist which went to press during this period makes not a single reference to Stalin.

4. The last mention of Stalin in lead editorials of the Cominform Journal was a reference to "the teaching of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin" in the 27 January issue. Three references to Stalin appear elsewhere

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in the body of the journal up to the opening of the 20th Congress. These consist of allusions to "Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin" in statements by Togliatti and Duclos, along with a Chinese announcement on projected publications which include thirteen volumes of Stalin's works.

Issues of Izvestia between Stalin's birthday anniversary (21 December) and the opening of the 20th CPSU Congress (14 February) were checked, excepting for one copy which could not be located. It was discovered that Izvestia references to Stalin during this period paralleled those in Pravda both in quantity and treatment. The only reference to Stalin occurring after 23 January which did not likewise appear in Pravda was the statement: "The Kirgiz people read in their own language the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, as well as outstanding Russian and world literature."

5. Conclusions: The preceding findings do not confirm the allegation made by B. L. Nicolaevsky in his article on "A Major Triumph of Zhukov", New Leader, 2 April. Favorable references to Stalin located during the period covered do not indicate a sudden upsurge of pro-Stalinist exhortations, but show that the old (1953) Party line was still in automatic effect. This line permitted favorable references to Stalin in the context of "collective leadership" but did not authorize any criticism. However, the fact that Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Pospelov and Furtseva adhered to the old line in November, December and January suggests that the Presidium had at that time not made the decision to attack Stalin publicly. The fact that Pravda in December still gave credit to Stalin's wartime accomplishments adds further weight to the assumption. Izvestia of 21 December (Stalin's birthday) also continued to use the flowery cliché's of the old line ("...Stalin...dear to millions of workers in all corners of the world...His uniting struggle for freedom...Champion of peace... champion of the people's safety...") The three week hiatus prior to the Congress (particularly the absence of favorable references in Kommunist which appeared regularly in the past) indicates that the decision to publicize the attacks on Stalin was made in mid-January. Extensive further analysis of the pattern of positive references to Stalin prior to the Congress might indicate whether or not there was a pattern suggestive of disagreement between the Soviet leaders on the Stalin issue. The evidence examined so far is not conclusive on this point.

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